

XLVII.—*Descriptions of new Rodents from Western South America.* By OLDFIELD THOMAS.

Ctenomys opimus, Wagn.

Ctenomys opimus, Wagn. Arch. f. Nat. 1848, p. 75.

There can be little doubt that the specimen on which this species was founded was one of the "large number" obtained by Mr. Bridges in Potosi and other parts of Bolivia, and referred by Waterhouse to *C. braziliensis* *.

The Museum contains several specimens from the same collector, and in addition a series of four from Tetiri, S. Peru, others from Sahama, N.W. Bolivia, and an isolated example from Jujuy; and these seem to represent three subspecies, of which the Sahama one, as being like some of Bridges's specimens, and the most like Wagner's description, may be taken as the typical subspecies. The other two are as follows:—

Ctenomys opimus nigriceps, subsp. n.

Similar in size to the typical form, or perhaps rather larger, and the tail rather longer.

Fur similarly soft and fine. General colour greyish fawn, more greyish and less sandy than in true *C. opimus*. Whole centre of face as far back as the nape prominently deep black; on the neck the black becomes much more grizzled with fawn, but is traceable as an ill-defined line down the back to the loins. On each side there is also a black band passing through the eye and across the ear, behind which it forms a distinct patch, separated from the central black of the crown by a projection forward of the body-colour. The sides of the muzzle and the chin are also black, behind which latter there is a contrasted transverse light mark corresponding in position with the rami of the mandible. Behind this again the centre of throat is prominently blackish. Upper surface of hands, feet, and whole of tail dark chocolate-brown; the comb-like fingers of the feet and the longer hairs at the end of the tail are, however, yellowish.

Skull as in the typical form.

Dimensions of the type (measured in the flesh by collector):—

Head and body 230 millim.; tail 100; hind foot (s. n.) 38, (c. n.) 43.

* N. H. Mamm. ii. p. 273.

Skull: greatest length in middle line 56; basilar length 47·8; zygomatic breadth 37; nasals $19 \times 8\cdot5$; interorbital breadth 12·5; least breadth across brain-case 21; greatest breadth on meatus 35; diastema 16; length of tooth-row (alveoli) 11·6.

Hab. Tetiri, about 40 miles W. of Puno, on the Puno-Moquegua road. Altitude 16,000 feet.

Type. Male. B.M. no. 97. 10. 3. 42. Collected 5th July, 1896, by J. Kalinowski. Four specimens examined.

Besides Mr. Kalinowski's four specimens, one of those collected by Mr. Bridges, though much faded, shows something of the same marking and may, perhaps, be referable to the same form. His other specimens agree better with Herr Garlepp's Sahaman examples of what may be considered as the typical *C. opimus*.

Ctenomys opimus luteolus, subsp. n.

Varying from true *C. opimus* in exactly the opposite direction to *C. o. nigriceps*, owing to the suppression of all the darker markings. General colour bright sandy buff all over, the centre of the face, if anything, rather lighter than the rest instead of being darker, the nasal region almost white. No darker markings round eyes, at back of ears, or on the chin. Under surface similar to upper, but rather brighter, almost ochraceous buff; no white markings anywhere. Hands, feet, and tail buffy, the last-named rather darker terminally.

Skull apparently as in the typical form.

Dimensions of the type (measured in skin, therefore only approximate):—

Head and body 220 millim.; tail 70; hind foot (s. u.) 36·5, (c. u.) 41.

Skull: greatest length in middle line 51; zygomatic breadth 32·7; nasals $19\cdot5 \times 8\cdot6$; interorbital breadth 12·7; least breadth across brain-case 19·5; diastema 15; length of tooth-series (alveoli) 11·2.

Hab. Cordilleras of Jujuy, Argentine Republic.

Type. Male. B.M. no. 99. 2. 22. 17. Presented by the La Plata Museum.

This tuco-tuco may be readily distinguished from its allies by its light-coloured muzzle, this part being brown or black in all the more northern specimens.

Ctenomys dorsalis, sp. n.

Size about as in *Ct. talarum*. Coloration very much as in the large *Ct. boliviensis*, Waterh. Fur soft and fine. General colour above shining buffy fawn, a marked black dorsal line running from the tip of the nose backward on to the rump; on the head this line is sharply defined and about half an inch broad, but broadens out and is less defined on the back. No dark lateral face-markings round eye or ear. Cheeks and chin like body, but the usual light collar behind them is well marked, running up on each side to the ear. Throat, chest, outer edges of belly, and a narrow line down its centre pale buffy, the hairs slaty basally; rest of belly white, the hairs white to their bases. Upper surface of hands and feet dirty whitish. Tail-hairs mixed black and white.

Incisors about the breadth of those of *Ct. talarum*, orange above and below.

Dimensions of the type (measured in skin, approximate):—

Head and body 156 millim.; tail 46; hind foot (s. u.) 27·2, (c. u.) 30·2.

Breadth of two upper incisors 4·3.

Hab. Northern Chaco of Paraguay.

Type. Female. Original number 255. Collected 7th May, 1900.

Native name "Sumkum." Presented by J. Graham Kerr, Esq.

The typical skin is unfortunately without a skull, but its striking coloration will readily distinguish this handsome little tuco-tuco from every species hitherto known except the enormously larger *Ct. boliviensis*.

Sciurus versicolor, sp. n.

Closely allied to *S. variabilis*, Geoff., but with the belly rich rufous.

Colour very variable, that of the specimen selected as the type as follows:—Head and posterior back dark grizzled olivaceous, the central area of the back darkened to black. Nape, shoulders, and outer side of arms rich rufous, grizzled along the centre line of the neck, deeper and purer on the arms. A small patch of yellowish at the posterior base of each ear. Outer side of hind limbs grizzled rufous. Whole under surface and the inner sides of arms and legs deep vivid orange-rufous. Tail grizzled blackish olivaceous for its basal fourth, then broadly washed with orange-yellow (more commonly bright rufous), its tip black.

In another specimen from the same locality the whole body is dull blackish rufous, nearly as rufous on the sides of the rump as on the shoulders.

Skull not appreciably different from that of *S. variabilis* from Santa Marta. Premolars $\frac{1}{2}$.

Dimensions of the type (measured in the flesh):—

Head and body 230 millim.; tail 225; hind foot (s. u.) 58, (c. u.) 63; ear 27.

Skull: greatest length 57; basilar length 43.3; greatest breadth 33.5; nasals (diagonally) 18×8.8 ; palate length 25; length of upper tooth-row 9.5.

Hab. (of type). Cachabi, Prov. Esmeraldas, N. Ecuador. Alt. 160 m.

Type. Male. B.M. no. 97. 11. 7. 32. Original number 25. Collected 3rd Jan., 1897, by Mr. W. R. Rosenberg.

The British Museum contains a large number of squirrels from the north-western corner of South America which have been referred to *S. variabilis*, Geoff.; but now that Mr. Bangs has shown that the true *S. variabilis* is constantly white-bellied (as is also the type of Gray's *S. Gerrardi*), it is evident that the red-bellied forms require a special name.

As is the case with *S. variabilis*, this species is a very variable one, and each of the several series of it in the Museum presents some striking variation among its members. The general tone varies in depth and degree of grizzling: the centre of the back varies from deep shining black to hardly darker than the sides, the ear-patches are occasionally suppressed, the middle part of the tail may be either yellow, orange, or red, the end of the tail may be either red or black (more frequently the latter), and even the distinctive red belly may be picked out with white markings in the axillæ, middle line, and groins. It is possible therefore that other variations will lead into *S. variabilis*, in which case it will have to be considered as a subspecies of that form.

Other localities from which the Museum has specimens of *S. versicolor* are—in Ecuador, Paramba (*Rosenberg*, *Miketta*); in Colombia—Valdivia, Lower Cauca (*Pratt*), Medellín (*Salmon*), San Pablo (*Hopke*), and Bogota (*Child*).

A rather similar coloration to that of *S. versicolor* is found in the true *S. griseogena*, Gray, of Venezuela; but that is a smaller form, as shown by its skull, and has a more uniformly grizzled back, less blackened behind and less reddened in front.

Mr. Nelson's *Sciurus caucensis* is not a member of this group, but is allied to—indeed, I do not see how it is different from—Gray's *S. medellinensis*, also from the Valley of

the Cauca. Perhaps this again will prove to be a synonym of *S. Pucherani*, Fitz. Neither species is referred to by Mr. Nelson.

XLVIII.—*A new Dassie from North Nyasaland.*

By OLDFIELD THOMAS.

Procavia mima, sp. n.

General appearance, colour, and length of hair almost exactly as in *P. (Dendrohyrax) arborea*, from which the number of the mammæ ($1-2=6$) widely separates it, and allies it to the more typical members of the genus. Fur very long, soft, and sleek, the hairs without the crinkling present in *arborea*. General colour above pale sandy fawn, heavily grizzled and lined with black, especially along the middle line; each hair dark brown for its basal 25–27 millim., then sandy for about 5 millim., and its terminal 5 millim. shining black. Crown and rump particularly black, owing to the very numerous shining black ends to the longer hairs. Upper lip and an inconspicuous spot over eye whitish. Ears rounded, well-haired, greyish white. Dorsal spot pale buffy white, the hairs this colour to their bases; peripheral hairs of spot not deeper buffy, as is often the case in *arborea*. Under surface white, with a faint buffy tinge, the bases of the hairs blackish. Upper surface of hands and feet grizzled black and pale buffy.

Dimensions of body apparently about the same as in *P. arborea*. Hind foot 57 millim.

Hab. Nyasa-Tanganyika Plateau, Northern Nyasaland.

Type. Female. Skin without skull. B.M.no.99.6.28.16. Presented in 1898 by Col. Manning, then Acting Commissioner, British Central Africa.

This Dassie is so strikingly like *P. arborea* that it has hitherto been regarded as belonging, or at least allied, to that species. But now that I find that it has $1-2=6$ mammæ, the formula of *Procavia* (s. s.) and *Heterohyrax*, as against the $0-1=2$ of *Dendrohyrax*, there can no longer be any doubt that it represents a distinct species. In colour and length of hair it is widely different from any known species with the same mammary formula.